

such virulent sectarian hatreds and corrupt leadership that only the military can hope to govern it successfully. That view has returned now that Pakistan has suffered its fourth military coup in 52 turbulent years as a nation. Even some Pakistanis who believe in democracy but were opposed to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif welcomed military intervention to change regimes.

But if a country is unruly, having generals rule is no solution. Pakistan's last military regime, which lasted from 1977 to 1988, was a useful ally, particularly in opposing the Russians in neighboring Afghanistan. But by crushing dissent, tolerating corruption and having no accountability for 11 years, the military lost credibility among Pakistanis and was eventually overwhelmed by the nation's problems.

Last spring, Pakistan's generals got the disastrous idea of sending forces into Indian territory to occupy the mountains of the disputed state of Kashmir. Indian guns and planes were driving the intruders out, and under American pressure Mr. Sharif wisely agreed to arrange for a facesaving withdrawal. Now the generals, unhappy with Mr. Sharif's retreat, have seized power, suspended the Constitution and imposed martial law, despite the absence of any threats of turmoil in the streets.

Imagine what might have happened in Kashmir had Mr. Sharif's withdrawal agreement not prevailed. The military might well have retaliated by bombing India's artillery positions, a step that probably would have forced Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to listen to his generals and invade Pakistan. These escalations could very easily have spiraled into a nuclear exchange.

As a nation, Pakistan always had a shaky foundation. Its name, which means "land of the pure," is drawn from some of its constituent ethnic groups. The Bengalis of East Pakistan broke off in 1971 to become Bangladesh, and the other groups have been squabbling since. Islam is not the unifying ideology that Pakistan's founders hoped it could be.

One problem is that the original building blocks of Pakistani society—the clergy, the military and the wealthy feudal lords who owned most of the land—have fractured. Today the military is split into secular and Islamic camps. The landlords' power has flowed to a newly wealthy business class represented by Mr. Sharif. The clergy is split into factions, some of which are allied with Saudi Arabia, Iran, the terrorist Osama bin Laden, the Taliban in Afghanistan and others. Corruption, poverty, guns and drugs have turned these elements into an explosive mix.

To revive the idea of religion as the glue holding the country together, Pakistani leaders have promised many times to enforce Islamic law. But they have never been able to implement these promises because most Pakistanis are not doctrinaire in their approach to religion. Alternatively, the nation's leaders have seized on the jihad to "liberate" fellow Muslims in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-dominated state.

"The Pakistani army generals are trying to convince themselves that defeat in Kashmir was snatched from the jaws of victory by Sharif and his stupid diplomats," said Michael Krepon, president of the Henry L. Stimson Center. "This theory recurs in Pakistani history, and it is very dangerous."

In his address to the nation, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the army chief of staff who "dismissed" Mr. Sharif, spoke of the military as "the last remaining viable institution" of

Pakistan. But by imposing martial law, he has embarked on a well-trod Pakistani path toward ruining that reputation. Without question, Mr. Sharif blundered in cracking down on dissent, trying to dismiss General Musharraf and relying on cronies and family members for advice. Some Indians like the writer M.J. Akbar, editor of *The Asian Age*, say that it might be easier to make a deal with Pakistan's generals now that they are overtly in charge, rather than manipulating things behind the scenes. But a major reason Pakistan has such a stunned political tradition, compared with India, is that the army has run the country for nearly half its short history. The question remains: If Pakistanis are not capable of governing themselves, why would Pakistanis wearing uniforms be any different?

FASTER INTERNET SERVICE THROUGH GREATER CHOICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 1 minute.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, Internet use and access is booming and competition among Internet service providers is finally beginning to offer consumers real choices. These developments make on-line communication easier, cheaper, and more reliable.

Unfortunately, consumers have not yet fully realized the benefits of increased competition as was predicted with the passage of the Telecommunications Act. One way to give consumers these benefits is to let our local telephone companies enter into Internet competition.

Permitting the Baby Bells to compete in Internet service will spur investment in technology by giving companies the incentive to upgrade their networks.

Consumers will benefit by receiving faster Internet service through a greater choice of providers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to consider legislation to give Internet consumers more access to the Internet.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 37 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Rabbi Raphael Gold, Savannah, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Our Heavenly Father, we pray that Thou mayest endow this august body, the duly elected representatives of the people of these United States, with the power of wisdom which comes from Thee.

In these perilous times, we pray, O Lord, that Thy qualities of mercy endure now and forever in the hearts of this Congress. Infuse them with Thy spirit of compassion, understanding, and Thy spirit of holiness, that they may fulfill their charge. May they speedily address the problems of poverty, hunger and homelessness which afflict such a large segment of this Nation and the world.

May this great land of ours, blessed by God with the resources, both spiritual and material, realize its potential with which it has been created. May all the differences which deflect from the realization of our goals be set aside, so that peace and prosperity, truth and justice, freedom and equality be the heritage and legacy of all peoples, both here and abroad.

May the Members of the Congress, and all Americans, rise to the fulfillment of the motto engraved on our coinage, *e pluribus unum*, that we are one people, created in the image of God, responsible for each other's well-being, so that we might truly dedicate our lives to the words which appear above us, "In God We Trust," and may he always be the guiding light of this Congress. And let us all say, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Evidently a quorum is not present.

Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this vote will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.